

Aberystwyth University

The later years of the Cheap Repository

Stoker, David

Published in:

Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America

DOI:

[10.1086/692742](https://doi.org/10.1086/692742)

Publication date:

2017

Citation for published version (APA):

Stoker, D. (2017). The later years of the Cheap Repository. *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America*, 111(3), 317-344. <https://doi.org/10.1086/692742>

Document License

Unclear 1

General rights

Copyright and moral rights for the publications made accessible in the Aberystwyth Research Portal (the Institutional Repository) are retained by the authors and/or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

- Users may download and print one copy of any publication from the Aberystwyth Research Portal for the purpose of private study or research.
- You may not further distribute the material or use it for any profit-making activity or commercial gain
- You may freely distribute the URL identifying the publication in the Aberystwyth Research Portal

Take down policy

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact us providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

tel: +44 1970 62 2400
email: is@aber.ac.uk

The later years of the Cheap Repository

Introduction

The circumstances leading to the foundation of the Cheap Repository for Moral and Religious Literature in March 1795 and its remarkable success during the first two or three years of its operation are well known. Gordon Spinney published many of the key documents and produced a detailed listing of the 114 titles published during this period in an excellent article published in *The Library* in September 1939.¹ Since then there have been many accounts of the literary, social, religious and political impact of the tracts, and studies of the life and work of Hannah More who was the originator of the scheme, the author of more than half of them and the driving force behind its operation.

Spinney finished his detailed account and bibliography of the tracts at the time of the replacement of John Marshall, the second “Printer to the Cheap Repository,” by John Evans, which took place towards the end of 1797. His decision to limit his bibliography to what he called the “Hazard and Marshall edition” (derived from the names of the first two printers) was probably made for pragmatic reasons. Copies of the individual tracts printed by Evans after this date were more difficult to find and very difficult to date accurately. Nevertheless, the institution struggled on for a further year, during which negotiations were conducted with Marshall over copyrights that he claimed and the stocks of existing tracts that he held. At same time a collected edition of the tracts, in three volumes, was published by Francis and Charles Rivington, and printed by Evans.² This was intended for middle-class readers, and was so successful that new editions were also published in 1799 and 1800.

¹ Gordon Harold Spinney, “Cheap Repository Tracts; Hazard and Marshall Edition,” *The Library: Transactions of the Bibliographical Society* 20, (1939/40): 295-340. This is the form of its name on its prospectus: the institution was also occasionally referred to on its publications as the “Cheap Repository for Religious and Moral Tracts”.

² [Hannah More et al], *Cheap Repository Shorter Tracts*, (London: sold by F. and C. Rivington, No. 62, St. Paul's Church-Yard; J. Evans, No. 41, Long Lane, West-Smithfield; J. Hatchard, No. 173, Piccadilly; and S. Hazard, Bath, 1798), ESTC T30544; *Cheap Repository Tracts; Entertaining, Moral, and Religious*, (London: F. and C. Rivington, ..., 1798), ESTC

Spinney was also aware that some new individual titles had probably been published during this time as there were other titles included in one of the three collected editions of the tracts, but in his opinion he had seen no examples “which can safely be assigned before 1800.”³ Eventually, after September 1798, the Cheap Repository ceased to produce any new titles for nineteen years and existed purely as a means of subsidising the reprinting and distribution of the existing titles, funded by half of the profits from the sale of the collected editions.

Spinney’s bibliography was also limited to describing the copies he had consulted in the British Museum Library and the Bristol and Bath Public Libraries and he only sought to “provide a rough outline of the innumerable issues and editions they went through.” Despite the continuing academic interest in Hannah More and the tracts, relatively little work relating to their bibliography or publishing history has been undertaken since Spinney’s article although Harry Weiss contributed two articles entitled “Hannah More’s Cheap Repository Tracts in America, in 1946.” Also Gilles Duval has published an account of the iconography of the woodcuts used on some of the tracts. However, to date there has been no detailed consideration of the tracts first printed by John Evans, those published in Dublin, or indeed of the continuation of the scheme in London well into the nineteenth century. Some of the more popular titles would be reprinted dozens of times as both individual tracts and in collected editions by the 1840s.⁴

T30545 and *Cheap Repository Tracts for Sunday Reading*. (London: Rivington, ..., 1798). ESTC T30546.

³ Spinney, “Cheap Repository Tracts,” 309.

⁴ Ibid, 312; Harry B. Weiss, “Hannah More’s Cheap Repository Tracts in America,” *Bulletin of the New York Public Library* 50.7 (1946): 539-49 and 50.8 (1946): 634-41, Gilles Duval “Les illustrations des Cheap Repository Tracts dans leur context “ *Bulletin de la société d'études anglo-américaines des XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles*, 44.1 (1997): 165-187. The best source for the Irish tracts remains “Books printed in Dublin by known printers”, *A Catalogue of the Bradshaw Collection of Irish books in the University library, Cambridge*, 3 vols. (Cambridge: University Library, 1916): vol.1. 290-306, although the assigned dates need to be checked against Mary Pollard, *A Dictionary of Members of the Dublin Book Trade*, (London: Bibliographical Society, 2000). Many, but by no means all, of the Evans editions are listed in the first volume of Emanuel Green, *Bibliotheca Somersetensis: A Catalogue of*

A recent article by the present author showed that there had been a bitter personal and commercial rivalry between John Marshall and John Evans a few years prior to the involvement of either man with the Cheap Repository. It also provided some more details of John Evans' role as the printer of the tracts during the remaining years of the eighteenth century and of Marshall's publication of a rival series of seventy-three "unofficial" Cheap Repository Tracts during 1798 and 1799. (The titles of Marshall's "unofficial" series had been listed by Spinney with their dates of entry in the Stationers' Register but he'd made no attempt to describe them.) However, both of these accounts could only guess at the reason why Evans was appointed in Marshall's place during the last weeks of 1797 and exactly what new titles were published by Evans over the ensuing ten months before the "official" publishing scheme was brought to a close (at least as far as the issuing of new titles was concerned). ⁵

The Cheap Repository Tracts present many problems to descriptive bibliographers and library cataloguers. As Spinney stated, the individual tracts survived in "innumerable issues and editions." When considering all of the series between 1795 and the 1830s, in all of the cities in which they were produced, this number is likely to exceed one thousand. They were produced in differing formats including half sheet broadside ballads, slip songs and octodecimo chapbooks, although the majority were octavo or duodecimo. As with other contemporary chapbooks, they were often printed using half sheet imposition leading to widespread confusion and misidentification of the format. They display different series titles – such as "Cheap Repository" or "Cheap Repository Sunday Reading" which have sometimes been catalogued as a part of the main title. The tracts themselves are never dated although useful dating information could be obtained for the Hazard and Marshall tracts from the entries in the Stationers' Register or else from advertisements or announcements in spare

Books, Pamphlets, Single Sheets, and Broad-sides in Some Way Connected with the County of Somerset, 3 volumes, (Taunton: Barnicott and Pearce, 1902). (Unfortunately, this source frequently confuses the different series of tracts and has introduced many dating errors and inconsistencies to the bibliographical record.)

⁵ David Stoker, "John Marshall, John Evans and the Cheap Repository Tracts, 1793-1800," *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America*, 107: 1, (2013): 81-115.

pages. However, such information is rarely available for the editions produced by Evans and his successors.⁶

There are also other titles, printed by both Marshall and Evans which bear many similarities to the tracts in both look and content, and have sometimes been confused with them, although they do not form a part of any of the series. For example, *The Necessity and Advantages of an Early Piety*, or *A Short Sketch of the State of France, at the End of the Year 1796*, both of which were printed by Marshall, are sometimes to be found in bound collections of tracts. There are a dozen or more titles “Sold by” John Evans and his successors which have been described as being from the Cheap Repository by library cataloguers and which appear on the WorldCat and COPAC databases although in every instance where the author has been able to check, they have proved to be moral or religious tracts published by Evans which have been bound together with genuine Cheap Repository titles.⁷

Taken together, these factors have led to misdating and inconsistencies in cataloguing practices between major libraries and the creation of “ghost editions,” whilst many genuine editions have remained unidentified and unrecorded. It is also unfortunate that the Tracts were at their most popular during the years spanning the turn of the nineteenth century. Thus many nineteenth century editions have been recorded in the *English Short-title Catalogue* (ESTC) and eighteenth century editions assumed to be later than they are. However, the confusions regarding the entries for the tracts on ESTC are gradually being resolved although those editions produced between 1801 and the mid-nineteenth century continue to present users with many bibliographical problems.

⁶ See *Small Books for the Common Man*, ed. John Meriton, (London: The British Library, 2010), 898-905 for a discussion of the formats of chapbooks.

⁷ *The Necessity and Advantages of an Early Piety*, ([London]: John Marshall, ... [1795?]), ESTC T174332; *A Short Sketch of the State of France, at the End of the Year 1796*, (London: John Marshall, ... [1797?]), ESTC T300709. See also OCLC WorldCat: The World's Largest Library Catalog <<https://www.worldcat.org/>> and COPAC: National, Academic & Specialist Library Catalogue <<http://copac.jisc.ac.uk/>>. Only those items bearing the series title “Cheap Repository” or which use the descriptor “Printer to the Cheap Repository” in their imprint have been considered in this article.

The object of this article is therefore to revisit the reasons for the substitution of John Evans in place of John Marshall as “Printer to the Cheap Repository”, using newly discovered information, and to seek to create a more complete and systematic list of the new “official” titles first published by Evans between December 1797 and October 1798. It will also briefly survey the reprinting of the individual tracts in London after 1798, giving an indication as to how these may be dated more accurately than heretofore, whilst also noting the collected editions. Finally, the article will consider the circumstances surrounding the remarkable revival of the scheme that took place during the year 1817, the new titles that then emerged and how some of the existing titles were adapted to meet a new, more overtly political, purpose.

The appointment of John Evans

The first Cheap Repository Tract to be printed by John Evans following his appointment was *The Fall of Adam* which, as usual, has no date on the title page. The work does however contain the following note:

The Conductors of the Cheap Repository beg leave to inform the Friends of the Institution, that the Cheap Repository Tracts, hereafter to be published, will be printed and sold by Mr Evans, No. 41, and 42, Long-Lane, West Smithfield; they will be sold also by Mr. Hatchard, No. 173, Piccadilly; Mr. Marshall, the former Printer and Seller, having refused to continue to print or sell the Single Tracts, either Wholesale or Retail, unless the Copyright should be given him, which it has not been thought expedient to do, except on Conditions, which Mr. Marshall has not chosen to comply with.

Mess. Rivingtons (sic), St. Paul’s Church Yard, propose immediately to print, in Three Volumes, a corrected and improved Edition of most of the Tracts which have been published, up to the End of this Year; one of the volumes containing the longer Stories and some of the Poetry; another, the shorter Stories and some Ballads; and the Third, the Sunday Readings; any of which Volumes may be had separately in about Six Weeks or Two Months, from this time, at Messrs. Rivington’s, or Mr. Evans’s, or Mr Hatchard’s.

Messrs. Rivington’s will also print some new Editions of several of the Single Tracts which were before sold by Mr. Marshall.

Half the Profit which may arise on the Sale of all these new Editions of the Tracts, will belong to Messrs. Rivingtons, and the other Half to the Conductors of the

Repository, who will expend it in promoting and extending the Sale, and in lowering the Price of the Tracts hereafter to be print by Mr. Evans.

The new Tracts will be published once in three Months only – namely, on the 1st of January; 1st. of April; 1st of July; and 1st. of October.

* * Please to take Notice, that new Tracts continue to be circulated and sold by Mr. Marshall, the former Printer, entitled, “Cheap Repository,” which do not proceed from this Institution.

December 6. 1797.⁸

Throughout 1797 Hannah More and her committee had been struggling to keep pace with their gruelling self-imposed production schedule of three new titles each month. As Anne Stott stated in her biography of More:

It was too much for one woman, and was fast destroying Hannah More’s fragile health. After the first rush of enthusiastic volunteers the authors dropped off one by one, so that, as she told Zachary Macaulay, she had “often been driven to the necessity of furnishing three monthly pieces myself”.⁹

Whereas the tracts published during the first two and a quarter years of the scheme had been entered in the Stationers’ Register under Hannah More’s name, from the end of June 1797 onwards they were entered under John Marshall’s name. Marshall’s role had initially been as one of several distributors of the tracts and then, from May 1795, as one of two joint printers. In February 1796 he took over as the sole printer and became the principal distributor but now seemed to be taking a more active role in the publication process as a whole. From the wording of the above note it would appear that this had been done with the knowledge and agreement of the committee, but he “had not chosen to comply with” certain conditions associated with his doing so. More also later complained to a friend that her tract, *The History of Mr. Fantom*, sold out in three days after publication in the August but “Marshall has been so negligent as to let it lie out of print”. Finally, in September 1797, the publishers failed to meet their deadline for the first time and only two tracts were issued for the month. This was

⁸ *The Fall of Adam: with Some Account of the Creation of the World*, ([London]: Sold by John Evans, ..., [1797]), 16 (ESTC N505316). A shortened version of this note was also published in the *Star* newspaper on, December 12, 1797; Issue 2908.

⁹ Anne Stott, *Hannah More: the First Victorian*, (Oxford: University Press, 2003), 205.

not due to any neglect by either Marshall or More but rather the failure of Henry Thornton, the Treasurer of the Institution, to deliver a promised manuscript in time. Nevertheless she wrote to Macaulay, that “Mr. M. has never belied my first opinion of him, selfish, tricking and disobliging from first to last.”¹⁰

More probably realised that things could not continue as before, and it was at this time that she came up with the idea of reducing the 1798 output by two-thirds. In the same letter to Macaulay she noted that “at Christmas the three volumes will be complete, when I promise myself a little cessation.”¹¹ Marshall, who since 1796 had devoted most of his business activities to printing and distributing the tracts, was no doubt furious when he discovered the plan in the November, and it would seem from the above note that he had then threatened to continue publishing them on his own account. This no doubt led to the appointment of John Evans as his successor.

In addition to his role of printer of the tracts, Marshall had also been the principal distributor from his shop at 17 Queen Street, and Evans also took on this role from his own premises at 42 Long Lane, West Smithfield (a shop which he had formerly managed on behalf of John Marshall). The summer of 1797 had seen the retirement of Richard White from his shop at 173 Piccadilly, who had been the distributor of the tracts in Westminster. White’s business was taken over by the twenty-nine year old John Hatchard, who was appointed in his place at the same time as Evans’ appointment. The bookseller John Elder of North Bridge, Edinburgh, was dropped from his role of distributor of the tracts in Scotland and Northern England at this time, a decision that would later cause difficulties. Samuel Hazard of Bath, the original

¹⁰ Spinney, “Cheap Repository Tracts”, 307; Stoker, “John Marshall, John Evans and the Cheap Repository Tracts”, 101-8; Letter to Anne Kennicott, dated “Bath Xmas Day” [1797?]. Hannah More collection, (Box 2, Folder 85), William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, University of California Los Angeles; and Mary G. Jones, *Hannah More* (Cambridge: University Press, 1952), 143.

¹¹ Letter to Zachary Macaulay, September 8, 1797 in Arthur Roberts, *Letters of Hannah More to Zachary Macaulay, Esq.* (New York, Robert Carter & Brothers, 1855), 16. She was referring to the three collected volumes for 1795, 1796 and 1797. See also Spinney “Cheap Repository Tracts”, 307.

printer of the tracts, was however retained as a distributor in the west of England, and would continue so until his death in 1806 when he was succeeded by his son-in-law John Binns.¹²

The committee had no choice but to continue dealing with Marshall during the early part of 1798 as he was holding the back stock of the tracts. However, by the end of the summer these had been purchased from him for between thirty and forty pounds. The three volumes of the promised collected edition had also been published during the April and May of that year. In a letter to William Bankes, dated 20 September 1798, More also stated: “all that are now printed will continue to be sold as usual, and either Evans or Marshall will reprint such as are out of print and most called for.”¹³

On 22 September 1798 Hannah More sent the last three tracts to the printer and wrote in her diary “Cheap Repository is closed. Bless the Lord! Oh my Soul! that I have been spared to accomplish that work.” Thereafter (or at least for the next nineteen years) all new tracts issued under the banner of the Cheap Repository were reprints of the existing titles.¹⁴

The “John Evans series” of the tracts

From the wording of the note in *The Fall of Adam*, it would appear that there should be fifteen “official” Cheap Repository Tract titles first printed by John Evans during 1797 and 1798: the three tracts for December 1797, and three each on the first day of January, April, July and October 1798. If Hannah More followed the usual publishing pattern then five of these would be ballads, five moral tales in prose (sometimes described as “histories”) and five with the series title “Sunday reading” and containing a religious message. Unfortunately not all of the earliest editions appear to have survived, although in some cases there is evidence that they once existed.

¹² Stoker, “John Marshall, John Evans and the Cheap Repository Tracts”, 86-95; Pottle, Mark. “Hatchard, John (1768–1849).” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison. Oxford: OUP, 2004. Online ed. Ed. Lawrence Goldman. Oct. 2005. 18 Dec. 2015 <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/12590>>; British Book Trade Index, <<http://bbti.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/details/?traderid=32415>>.

¹³ Stott, *Hannah More*, 207; the *Whitehall Evening Post*, April 24-26, 1798; Issue 8027; British Library Add. MS 42511, fo.5.

¹⁴ Jones, *Hannah More*, 143.

~~Eleven~~ Twelve titles may be attributed to this group with confidence as there is a surviving tract with the imprint: “Sold by J. Evans, (Printer to the Cheap Repository for Moral and Religious Tracts) No. 41 and 42 Long Lane, West-Smithfield, and J. Hatchard, No. 173, Piccadilly, London. By S. Hazard, Bath. And by all booksellers, newsmen, and hawkers, in town and country”, which was the form of imprint used on *The Fall of Adam*. These are:

1. *The Fall of Adam, Our First Parent*, (which included the note dated 6 December 1797). This has the series title “Sunday Reading” and was also later included in *Cheap Repository Tracts for Sunday Reading* (1798).¹⁵
2. *Thanksgiving Day*, [January 1798?]. The day of general thanksgiving for the three naval victories referred to in the title was 19 December 1797 but from the inclusion in the title of the account of the procession to St. Paul's it may have been published after the event. The title does not appear in any of the collected editions of tracts between 1798 and 1800.¹⁶
3. *Here and There or, This World and the Next*. This was a short poem by Hannah More described as ‘being suitable thoughts for the New Year and comparing life on Earth and in Heaven. It seems likely to have been published on 1st January 1798. The final two pages contain ‘A list of tracts already printed by the Cheap Repository,’ but this does not differentiate between the Marshall and Evans editions.¹⁷

¹⁵ See footnote 8 above.

¹⁶ *Thanksgiving Day. An Address to All Persons, Especially to our Brave Sailors, Suited to the Thanksgiving Day; in which Address an Account is Given of our Three Great Victories Obtained, Through the Blessing of God, over the French, the Spaniards, and the Dutch, by Admiral Lord Howe, Admiral Sir John Jervis, ... and Admiral Duncan, ... To which is Added, an Account of the Procession to St. Paul's*, (London: Sold by J. Evans, ... [1797 or 98?]. (ESTC N14470).

¹⁷ Hannah More, *Here and There or, This World and the Next. Being Suitable Thoughts for the New Year*. ([London]: Sold by J. Evans, ... [1798?]) ESTC N505340. The title appears in *Cheap Repository Shorter Tracts*, (London: F. and C. Rivington; J. Evans; J. Hatchard; and S. Hazard, Bath, 1798), ESTC T30544. The edition that is recorded at ESTC T84913, “sold by J. Evans, and Co.” must be later than July 1801 as it gives Hatchard’s address as 190, Piccadilly.

4. *The Gravestone: Being an Account (Supposed to be Written on a Gravestone,) of a Wife who Buried Both her Children on One Day*, The title consisted of two poems printed on five pages of text and sold for one halfpenny. Together with the next title, it was listed on the advertisement at the end of *Here and There*, suggesting publication in January 1798.¹⁸

5. *The Black Prince: a True Story*; [January 1798?] a sixteen page prose account of the life and death of Prince Naimbanna, an African king's son, who arrived in England in the year 1791, and set sail on his return in June, 1793. The title also appears in the 1799 edition of *Cheap Repository Shorter Tracts*. Later editions survive printed by John Evans & Co., (c. 1799-1801), John Evans and Son, (c. 1812-17) and John Evans and Sons (c. 1818-20).¹⁹

6. *The Death of Christ; or, Tract for Good Friday*, [April 1798?]) This has the series title "Sunday Reading". Good Friday was on 31 March 1798 so presumably this was one of the tracts published for 1st April. This title was later included in the 1800 edition of *Cheap Repository Tracts for Sunday Reading*.²⁰

¹⁸ *The Gravestone: Being an Account (Supposed to be Written on a Gravestone,) of a Wife who Buried Both her Children on One Day, and Who, from that Time, Became a Very Devout Christian. With a Suitable Address to Those who May be Attending a Funeral*. (London: Sold by J. Evans, [1798?]) ESTC N505685. The title was also listed in *Cheap Repository Shorter Tracts*, (London: F. and C. Rivington; ..., 1798 (ESTC T30544)).

¹⁹ *The Black Prince: a True Story; Being an Account of the Life and Death of Naimbanna, an African King's Son, who Arrived in England in the Year 1791, and Set sail on his Return in June, 1793*. (London: Sold by J. Evans, [1798?]) ESTC N505684. The title appears in *Cheap Repository Shorter Tracts*. ([London]: Sold by F. and C. Rivington; ..., 1799. ESTCT076318, 347-364.

²⁰ *The Death of Christ; or, Tract for Good Friday*, (London: Sold by J. Evans, [1798?]) ESTC T221162. This was referred to as "Good Friday Tract" by Evans & Co. in an advertisement in the *Caledonian Mercury* 17 May 1800. *Cheap Repository Tracts for Sunday Reading*. (London: sold printed by Bye and Law, St. John's Square, Clerkenwell; and sold by F. and C. Rivington, ..., 1800), ESTC T184326, 273-286.

7. *The Rebellion of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram*, [July 1798?]. This has the series title “Sunday Reading”. It contains an account of the Old Testament rebellion against Moses drawing parallels with the current situation. From a reference in the text to a “rebellion in Ireland” then taking place, this may be dated to the Summer of 1798. The title does not later appear in any of the collected editions.²¹

8. *Parley the Porter*, [1798?] This was an allegorical prose tale, with some parallels to Spenser, in which the porter of the castle takes an adulterated draught offered by Flatterwell and betrays his master. ~~Later editions are Signed~~ “Z” indicating that it was written by Hannah More, this title was printed in the 1800 edition of *Cheap Repository Shorter Tracts*.²²

9. *‘Tis All for the Best*, [1798?]. A prose tale in the form of a dialogue between Mrs Simpson and Miss Betty showing that “God’s ways are not our ways” – an answer to Voltaire’s *Candide*. The title does not appear in any of the collected editions, but it was later included in *The Complete Works of Hannah More*.²³

²¹ *The Rebellion of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, Shewing the Dreadful End of Them and Their Party. Being a Story Calculated to Instruct All Persons Belonging to the Societies of United Englishmen, or United Irishmen; and Earnestly Recommended to Such as May be Invited to Join Them. God Save the King*, (London: sold by J. Evans, ... [1798?]); ESTC N504854. See also David Stoker, “An Unrecorded Cheap Repository Tract: The Rebellion of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram,” *A Monument of Fame: The Lambeth Palace Library Blog* August 14, 2015 <<https://lambethpalacelibrary.wordpress.com/2015/08/14/an-unrecorded-cheap-repository-tract-the-rebellion-of-korah-dathan-and-abiram/>>.)

²² Hannah More, *Parley the Porter, an Allegory: Shewing How Robbers Without Can Never Get into an House Unless There are Traitors Within*, (London: sold by J. Evans, [1798?]); not in ESTC but there is a copy in Bristol Public Library (B17628). *Cheap Repository Shorter Tracts* (London: printed by Bye and Law; and sold by F. and C. Rivington; ... 1800): 223-239, ESTC T208013.

²³ Hannah More, *‘Tis All for the Best*, (London: sold by J. Evans, [1798?]. ESTC N13630. The title was also printed in *The Works of Hannah More*, 8 vols. (London: Cadell & Davies, 1801). 4. 288-324, and *The Complete Works of Hannah More*, 7 vols. (New York, Harper and Brothers, 1835), I., 105-117.

10. *The Thunderstorm, or, the History of Tom Watson, the Unnatural Son*, [1798?]. This was a sixteen page prose tale. Another edition, “Sold by J. Evans & Co.” also survives which must date from before June 1801, as Hatchard is shown on the imprint at 173 Piccadilly. (There were also two nineteenth century editions printed by Howard and Evans and J. Evans & Son.)²⁴

11. *The Judgment Day; a True and Just Account is Given of the Manner in which the Scriptures Teach that We, and All Mankind, Are to Be Tried on the Great Day of Judgment*, [1798?]. This has the series title “Sunday Reading”. It was a twenty two page prose tale (quite different from the 1797 Cheap Repository ballad printed by Marshall entitled *The Day of Judgment*). Another edition, “Sold by J. Evans & Co.” circa 1801 also survives.²⁵

12. *The Two Shoemakers. Part VI. Dialogue the second. On the duty of carrying religion into our amusements.*) Parts I-V of this prose tale had been written by Hannah More and printed in the Hazard and Marshall series, all six parts were advertised as part of a collected edition by Evans and Co. circa 1800.²⁶ The title was also later included in the first volume of *The Works of Hannah More*, (1835), entitled “Repository Tales”.

Two further Christmas tracts appear to have been issued by John Evans during December 1797 as their titles are listed on the advertisement at the end of *Here and There*, mentioned above. The texts of these titles also appear in one or more of the collected editions of the tracts published by Rivington between 1798 and 1800.

²⁴ *The Thunderstorm, or, the History of Tom Watson, the Unnatural Son: Being a Warning to All Children*, (London: sold by J. Evans, [1798?]) not in ESTC, but there is a copy at Bristol Public Library. Another edition was “Sold by J. Evans & Co., [1800?]”, is at ESTC T192441.

²⁵ *The Judgment Day; a True and Just Account is Given of the Manner in which the Scriptures Teach that We, and All Mankind, Are to Be Tried on the Great Day of judgment*²⁵: *Shewing Plainly Who Shall Go Away to Everlasting Death, and Who to Life Eternal; With a Few words of Encouragement to Fearful Christians*, (London: sold by J. Evans, [1798?]); ESTC T178248 and another edition “Sold by J. Evans and Co.,... [1798]” ESTC N54930.

²⁶ *The Two Shoemakers. Part VI, Dialogue the Second, on the Duty of Carrying Religion into our Amusements*. Sold by Howard & Evans, ... [c.1801-10?], and *The Works of Hannah More*, (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1835), Volume 1 “Repository Tracts”, 254-257.

1. *A New Christmas Tract, or the Right Way of Rejoicing at Christmas*, [December 1797?]. Later editions have the series title “Sunday Reading”.²⁷

2. *A New Christmas Hymn*, [December 1797?] beginning: “O how wond’rous is the story”. This was listed in the advertisement in *Here and There*, as ‘Christmas Carol for 1797.’ By May 1800 it was being advertised as one of a small collection of Cheap Repository ballads (including *Turn the Carpet*, *The Noble Army of Martyrs* and *The Plow Boy’s Dream*).²⁸

This leaves ~~two~~ **one** missing titles where no surviving eighteenth-century examples are currently known and which do not feature in any collected edition between 1798 and 1800, or in the advertisement in *Here and There*. There are a number of possible candidates. ~~The first of these was Part VI. Of *The Two Shoemakers*. Parts I-V of this prose tale had been written by Hannah More and printed in the Hazard and Marshall series. Only an early nineteenth century (Howard and Evans) edition of part VI is now known, but there is likely to have been an earlier edition since all six parts were advertised as part of a collected edition by Evans and Co. circa 1800. The title was also later included in the first volume of *The Works of Hannah More*, (1835), entitled “Repository Tales”.~~²⁹

²⁷ *A New Christmas Tract, or the Right Way of Rejoicing at Christmas. Shewing the Reasons We Have for Joy at the Event of our Saviour's Birth. In which also a Description is Given of the Dreadful State the World was in Before his Coming; with Some Remarks Suited to the Times in which we Live.* The title appears in *Cheap Repository Tracts for Sunday Reading*. (1798), 158-170 and was advertised by Evans & Co. in the *Caledonian Mercury* 17 May 1800. Two 19th century editions survive, one by Howard and Evans (c.1801-12) and one by John Evans and Son (c.1813-18).

²⁸ The title appears in *Cheap Repository Tracts; Entertaining, Moral, and Religious*, (London: F. and C. Rivington; J. Evans; J. Hatchard; and S. Hazard, Bath, 1798). (ESTC T030545). Two 19th century editions of this tract together with *Turn the Carpet* survive, one printed by Howard and Evans (c.1802-12) and John Evans and Son (c.1813-18).

²⁹ *The Two Shoemakers. Part VI, Dialogue the Second, on the Duty of Carrying Religion into our Amusements.* Sold by Howard & Evans, ... [c.1801-10?], and *The Works of Hannah More*, (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1835), Volume 1 “Repository Tracts”, 254-257.

Identifying The last title seems more problematic with more than one **possibilities**. One candidate is a lost London edition of an abridgment of Benjamin Franklin's *Way to Wealth*, entitled *Path to Riches and Happiness*. Three Cheap Repository editions of this title survive, published together with two of the earlier ballads, and sold by William Watson and Son, No. 7, Capel-Street Dublin. Each of these must date from before the death of Watson senior in the summer of 1805. It is possible that these editions were preceded by a London edition, although Watson and Son. did publish at least one other title without an apparent London predecessor.³⁰

There are also three further short poems written by Hannah More which appeared among others by her in both the 1803 and 1835 editions of her *Collected works*, although they were not included in any of the collected editions of tracts and there is no other evidence to suggest they were issued under the auspices of the Cheap Repository. These were

1. *The Foolish Traveller; or, a Good Inn is a Bad Home.*
2. *The Impossibility Conquered: or, Love your Neighbor as Yourself.*
3. *The Puppet-Show.*³¹

Between December 1797 and October 1798 John Marshall had simultaneously issued thirty-three of his “unofficial tracts”, and Evans was continuing to warn buyers about their

³⁰ *Path to Riches and Happiness. By the Late Doctor Benjamin Franklin. To Which are Added, The Apprentice's Monitor, or Indentures, in Verse. And, The Market Woman, or Honesty is the Best Policy. A True Tale.* (Dublin: printed and sold by W. Watson and son. [1798-1805]. ESTC T207609 N64012, N23559. Watson and Son published three editions of a ‘Sunday Reading’ tract entitled *The two sisters*, and paraphrasing the story of Mary and Martha, where there is no evidence that there was ever a London edition (ESTC T192767, T300693’ and N67505).

³¹ *The Works of Hannah More*, 4 vols. (Dublin: Graisberry, 1803), (Volume 1 1-6 & 139-142), and *The Works of Hannah More*, (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1835), (Volume 1 “Repository Tracts”, 370-74 & 387-90). These are noticed in Anna Maree Blanch, “A Reassessment of the authorship of the *Cheap Repository Tracts*,” Masters Dissertation, Baylor University, 2009, Appendix A1.

existence in his advertisements as late as May 1800. The continued production of this series may have been a factor in the decision to wind up the Cheap Repository in the autumn of 1798, at least as far as the issuing of new publications.³²

The “Evans reprints”

Following his appointment as “Printer to the Cheap Repository”, John Evans and his successors printed and acted as distributors of more than two hundred and twenty reprinted editions of the existing titles first published by Hazard, Marshall or Evans himself, subsidised by half of the profits made from the collected editions. At some time during 1799 Evans began to refer to his business on advertisements and imprints as “J. Evans & Co.” to reflect his partnership with William Howard, and this form of imprint was still being used on the tracts after June 1801 when John Hatchard moved his shop from 173 to 190 Piccadilly.³³

The publication of the individual reprinted editions was rarely noted in the contemporary newspapers but there was one advertisement in the *Caledonian Mercury*, in May 1800 which spoke of complaints by local retailers of not being able to obtain a regular supply of the tracts. (This was presumably because John Elder was no longer holding supplies as he had ceased to be a distributor in 1797.) This advertisement listed forty-seven Cheap Repository titles which were then available, thirty-nine of which “Mr Evans has engaged to keep always in print.” By this time there had been some rationalisation of the content of the volumes – thus the six parts of “The Two Wealthy Farmers,” were now grouped together as “The History of Mr. Bragwell,” price 6d. Likewise the six parts of the “Two shoemakers” (price 4d.) and the four parts of “Joseph and his brethren,” (price 3d.). The titles that had formerly been issued as two parts, such as *The Shepherd of Salisbury Plain*, *The History of Tom White the Postillion*, *Black Giles the Poacher* and *The General Resurrection* (together with *The Day of Judgment*) were also now combined into one and sold for two pence each.³⁴

³² *The Caledonian Mercury* 17 May 1800.

³³ Evans had collaborated with Howard in the sale of patent medicines since 1792 (see Stoker, “John Marshall, John Evans and the Cheap Repository Tracts”, 90). The partnership would later become “Howard and Evans” printers and medicine vendors c. 1801/2. See also *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* under John Hatchard.

³⁴ *The Caledonian Mercury* May 17, 1800; Issue 12271; Hannah More, *The Two Wealthy Farmers; or, The History of Mr. Bragwell*, (J. Evans and Co. [1800?]) ESTC T178152;

Evans also continued to follow John Marshall's practice of re-issuing the texts of the former ballad titles grouped together as one penny chapbooks. Thus *Patient Joe; Wild Robert, Faith and Works* (formerly called *Dan and Jane*); and *The Gin shop* were issued together. Likewise *Sinful Sally, The Hampshire tragedy Bad Bargain*; and *Robert and Richard*. A third collection contained *Turn the Carpet; Christmas Hymn; The Noble Army of Martyrs* (formerly *The True Heroes*); and *The Plow Boy's Dream*.³⁵

A similar list of forty-five reprinted titles appears in the final page of the Evans & Co. edition of *The Gravestone* (which must postdate July 1801) but it is noteworthy that the firm does not advertise any halfpenny tracts at this time although they were still continuing to produce them.³⁶

John Evans was responsible for printing the first two collected editions of the tracts published by Rivington, in the spring of 1798 and the spring of 1799, but thereafter the publisher chose other printers for this task. Evans' name was however retained on the title page as one of several distributors. There was clearly a continuing demand for the tracts from a middle class readership as further collected editions were printed in 1803, 1807 and 1812. However, the contract with Rivington negotiated by Henry Thornton, was probably not much more beneficial than that with John Marshall since it also gave the copyrights to the publisher in return for half of the profits. This was something which Hannah More would later come to regret when she discovered, after Thornton's death in 1815, just how profitable these collected editions had been. She was particularly sorry as the contract had "obliged me to refuse permission to various printers in the North, who formally applied to me for that purpose."³⁷

Hannah More, *The Two Shoemakers*, (J. Evans and Co. before June 1801?), ESTC N14164; Hannah More, *The Shepherd of Salisbury Plain*, (J. Evans, and Co. after June 1801) ESTC T180694; *The History of Tom White, the Postillion*. (J. Evans and Co., after June 1801) ESTC N17928; *Black Giles, the Poacher*, (J. Evans and Co. before June 1801), ESTC N15156. No Evans & Co. edition of *Joseph and his Brethren* is known

³⁵ These collected ballad editions do not appear to have survived.

³⁶ *The Gravestone*, (J. Evans & Co. [1801]), 8.

³⁷ The three 1800 volumes of collected tracts (ESTC T208013, N471125 and T184326) were printed by Deodatus Bye and Henry Law of St John's Square, Clerkenwell; Stott, *Hannah*

From late 1801 or early 1802 the partnership became known as “Howard and Evans” and this was the form of imprint used on the individual tracts issued over the next decade, although the collected editions continued to have only “J. Evans” named as distributor on their imprints.³⁸

Early nineteenth century British publications have not been recorded as comprehensively or accurately as those of the eighteenth century, but some indication of the number of these reprints can be gained by comparing searches of the COPAC and the WorldCat databases for Cheap Repository items and removing any duplicates. Between them they record fifty-one individual tract titles with the “Howard and Evans” imprint (principally reprints of those first published by Marshall, but also five of the titles first published by John Evans). William Howard ~~appears to have withdrawn from the business during~~ died in April 1811 and for a brief period Evans reverts to the imprint “John Evans” before becoming “John Evans and Son,” as he was joined by his eldest son John Edward in 1812. COPAC and WorldCat record a further fifty-five reprinted Evans and Son editions. For the final two years of his career, from January 1818 until his death in March 1820, Evans was also joined in the business by his second son, Charles, and the imprint becomes “John Evans and Sons”. A further forty-eight reprinted editions are recorded by the two databases indicating that there was a sustained demand for the individual tracts as well as the collected editions. By this time Evans had become a wealthy man, able to leave his third son, Benjamin, a legacy of £1500, whilst the business was left as a going concern to his two elder sons.³⁹

More, 208; and a letter from More to Zachary Macaulay, 23 September 1815 (Huntington Library MY 671).

³⁸ See Ian Maxted, *The London Book Trades 1775-1800: A Preliminary Checklist of Members*, Exeter Working Papers in British Book Trade History, <<http://bookhistory.blogspot.co.uk/2007/01/london-1775-1800-e.html>>, William B. Todd, *A Directory of Printers and Others in Allied Trades: London and Vicinity 1800-1840*, (London: Printing Historical Society. 1972), 101, and Philip A.H. Brown, *London Publishers and Printers 1800-1870*, (London: British Library, 1982), 94. Howard and Evans advertise as medicine sellers in *Jackson's Oxford Journal* January 18, 1800; Issue 2438, but “Evans & Co.” were still advertising the tracts in the May of the same year.

³⁹ There are a few ‘John Evans’ imprints in existence which must post-date 1806 as they include the name of Samuel Hazard’s successor, John Binns. The earliest dateable reference

The “Spa Fields tracts”

Much has been written about the social, political and religious significance of the Cheap Repository Tracts and the audiences at which they were aimed; this is still a matter of debate. They are occasionally classified as “Juvenile” or “Children’s literature,” although the great majority were initially aimed at an unsophisticated adult audience. Those few examples that were specifically aimed at children, such as Isaac Watts’ *Divine Songs* or *Prayers to Be Used by a Child or Young Person*, required adult mediation.⁴⁰ Nevertheless, John Marshall did offer a selection of the tracts that remained on his hands in 1798, with a new title page specifically aimed at Sunday schools. Some of the American Tract Society collected editions in the nineteenth century were also entitled *Stories for the Young: Or, Cheap Repository Tracts, Entertaining, Moral, and Religious*.⁴¹

The tracts are also sometimes seen as the precursors of the Religious Tract Society publications for both adults and children, and that Society acknowledged the pioneering role

to J. Evans & Son is on the imprint of the collected edition *Cheap Repository Tracts for Sunday Reading*, (London: Rivington, 1812), which was advertised in *The Morning Chronicle* March 5th 1812; Issue 13362. Evans was buried March 13 1820 in Bunhill Fields, London (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:FQDX-CLQ>). His will (made February 17th, 1820 and proved February 1st 1721) is in the U.K. National Archives (PROB 11/1639).

⁴⁰ See Brian Alderson and Felix de Marez Oyens, *Be Merry and Wise: Origins of Children’s Book Publishing in England, 1650-1850* (London: British Library, 2006), 217-8; *Divine Songs Attempted in Easy Language for the Use of Children. By I. Watts*, ([Bath]: S. Hazard, [1795]), ESTC T300881; *Prayers to Be Used by a Child or Young Person*, ([London]: Sold by J. Marshall, [1796]), ESTC T48872.

⁴¹ *Cheap Repository Tracts: a Collection of Moral and Religious Publications, for the Use of Sunday Schools, &c. Published During the Year 1796*. ([London]: Printed and sold by John Marshall, at the Cheap Repository, [1798?]) not in ESTC but a copy at Princeton University (Ex) BV4510.A1 C62 1796. (The form of imprint suggests that it was issued after December 1797, and Marshall had sold-off his remaining stocks of official tracts by the summer of 1798).

of the Cheap Repository in their prospectus in 1799. Yet only one third of them had carried an overtly religious message.⁴²

It is mainly in the political arena that the significance of the tracts has been most subject to debate. Were they (as many commentators contend) an evangelical contribution to the loyalist propaganda offensive against the ideas of Thomas Paine or William Godwin, or an attempt to pacify the working-class reader at a time of food shortages and political dissent – “an evangelical effort to secure the subordination of the lower orders by promising them charitable provision in this world and salvation in the next.”⁴³ Others have suggested that their appeal was rather to a middle-class audience “who consumed morale-boosting, consolatory fantasies of working-class *contentment*.” Hannah More, is sometimes now portrayed as a counter-revolutionary feminist, advocating feminised methods of social reform, in spite of her well-known conservative political and social ideology.⁴⁴

⁴² *Proceedings of the First Twenty Years of the Religious Tract Society*, (London: The Religious Tract Society), preface p.iii; Leslie Shepard, *John Pitts Ballad Printer of Seven Dials London 1765-1844*, (London: Private Libraries Association, 1969), 32; Brian Alderson and Pat Garrett, *The Religious Tract Society as a Publisher of Children's Books*, (Hoddesdon: The Children's Book History Society, 1999), 9.

⁴³ See Henry Thompson, *Life of Hannah More*, (London: T. Cadell, 1838), 158; Richard Altick, *The English Common Reader*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), 69-77; Kevin Gilmartin, *Writing against revolution: Literary Conservatism in Britain 1790-1832*, (Cambridge University Press, 2007, 252.).

⁴⁴ For a discussion of recent interpretations of the significance of the tracts, see Ian Haywood, *The Revolution in Popular Literature: Print, Politics and the People 1790-1860*, (Cambridge University Press, 2004) Chapter 3 “The pax femina? Hannah More, counter revolution and the politics of female agency.” 56-78. The feminist interpretation of the role of the tracts is covered in Mitzi Myers, “Hannah More’s “tracts for the times”: social fiction and female ideology”, in Mary Ann Schofield and Cecilia Macheski, eds. *Fetter'd or Free? British Women Novelists 1670-1815*, (Athens: Ohio State University Press, 1991) and Anne Kostelanetz Mellor *Mothers of the Nation: Women's Political Writing in England, 1780-1830*, (Indiana University Press, 2002), Chapter 1. “Hannah More, Revolutionary Reformer.”

Several of the Cheap Repository Tracts issued during the 1790s contain political messages: for example: *The History of Mr. Fantom* is clearly a satire of Godwin, whilst *The Loyal Sailor* makes critical reference to the 1797 naval mutinies. Others address current political issues such as the food shortages, election abuses or the abolition of slavery. Yet these tracts represent only a minority of the total published. As Susan Pederson notes:

When one confronts the Cheap Repository as a whole, the political explanation becomes inadequate. Although the political content of “The Riot” is clear, this often-quoted ballad is one of the relatively few explicitly anti-Jacobin tracts in the Cheap Repository and is virtually lost among the reams of Sunday readings, allegories, and little moral tales that attack vices ranging from drunkenness to superstition and that defy a simple explanation.

Pederson rather sees the tracts as “a broad evangelical assault on late eighteenth-century popular culture ... less an attack on Thomas Paine than on Simple Simon.”⁴⁵

So how is it that such divergent opinions about the intended purpose of, and audience for, the tracts have come about and been sustained? One possible explanation is that Pederson is referring to those tracts issued between 1795 and 1798, whereas there was a further series of them with a more overtly political message.

Following a nineteen year hiatus during which no new titles were published by the Cheap Repository, Hannah More revived the idea in 1817 and issued a further twelve ballads and six **or more** chapbooks. Most of these were entirely new but some were adapted from existing works by her, either issued by the Cheap Repository during the 1790s or independently thereafter. The texts of these were amended to suit the new political climate during the economic depression that followed the ending of the Napoleonic Wars. For want of a better term, these have been referred to as the “Spa Fields tracts,” as the large public protest meetings at Spa Fields, Islington between November and December 1816, which would lead

⁴⁵ Susan Pedersen, “Hannah More Meets Simple Simon: Tracts, Chapbooks, and Popular Culture in Late Eighteenth-Century England”, *The Journal of British Studies*, vol. 25, No. 1 (Jan., 1986): 86-7..

to the passing of the *Treason Act* and the *Seditious Meetings Act* (both of which received Royal Assent in March 1817), appear to have been catalyst for their production.⁴⁶

The story is told by Thomas Taylor in his *Memoir of Mrs. Hannah More*.

From the close of 1816 till the spring of the following year, owing chiefly to an unexampled stagnation in trade, and severe agricultural depression, was a period of unusual public excitement. Great distress prevailed among the labouring classes, and a daring spirit of insubordination and plunder was fostered, by the extensive circulation, among the poor, of sceptical tracts. It occurred to several of Mrs. More's friends, that if she could be induced again to employ her pen in the production of publications similar to those she had previously written on a like occasion, it would have a beneficial result. They accordingly made the case known to her, and ventured to solicit her aid. This was instantly and most cheerfully granted; and though at an advanced age, and with feeble health, she commenced these labours with all her former zeal and activity. A number of tracts and ballads were soon produced; all adapted in different ways to meet the evil. Many editions of these were published by a committee, formed for the purpose, in London, and it was thought with a beneficial result.⁴⁷

Hannah More, by then in her seventies, would describe them as "her feeble aid towards furnishing antidotes to this spreading poison." Writing to Sir William Weller Pepys in January 1817, she states:

I did not think to turn ballad-monger in my old age. But the strong and urgent representations I have had from the highest quarters of the very alarming temper of the times, and the spirit of revolution which shows itself more or less in all

⁴⁶ For a discussion of the radical and conservative literature in what E.P. Thompson describes as "the heroic age of popular Radicalism" (1816-20) see Haywood, *The Revolution in Popular Literature*, Chapter 4 "The palladium of liberty: radical journalism and repression in the postwar era," 81-111, and Mona Scheuermann, *In Praise of Poverty: Hannah More Counters Thomas Paine and the Radical Threat*, (University Press of Kentucky, 2002), Chapter 4, 103-5.

⁴⁷ Thomas Taylor, *Memoir of Mrs. Hannah More, with Notices of Her Works, and Sketches of Her Contemporaries*, (London: Joseph Rickerby, 1838), 299.

manufacturing towns, has led me to undertake as a duty a task I should gladly have avoided.

Several of the new ballads were contributed to the *Anti-Cobbett or Weekly Patriotic Register* from February 1817, but when that periodical ceased in the April they began to reappear as a new series of Cheap Repository Tracts.⁴⁸

Writing in 1947, Mary Alden Hopkins was only able to cite one title among the new tracts – a reprint of *Village Politics*, under the title *The Village Disputants*, but she did also note that “Hannah furnished some new or revised songs.” Five years later, Mary Jones stated: “little is known of the tracts and songs published by Hannah More to the anti-Cobbett drive of 1817.” Yet the texts of most of the new and amended titles had been re-issued in a collected edition, published in 1819 by Rivington entitled *Cheap Repository Tracts, Suited to the Present Times*. Also, a near complete set of the “Spa Fields broadside ballads” survives in Chetham’s Library in Manchester, collected by William Robert Hay, a clerical magistrate and stipendiary chairman of the Salford Quarter Sessions who would later be involved in prosecuting those attending the “Peterloo Massacre” of 1819. Copies of several of the chapbooks have also since emerged in different library collections and have been discussed individually from time to time although they have never been considered as a coherent group.⁴⁹

The new tracts were all first printed by Evans and Son and contained the usual “Cheap Repository” series title. According to Jones, “tens of thousands were distributed by a central London Committee, others by her own efforts and those of her friends.”⁵⁰ They reinstated the individual broadside format for the new ballads and printed eight or sixteen page octavo

⁴⁸ *The Works of Hannah More*, (London: T. Cadell and W. Davies, 1818), 18 vols. vol.6 “Tracts written during the riots in the year 1817,” 337-8. William Roberts, *Memoirs of the Life and Correspondence of Mrs. Hannah More*, third edition, (London: Seeley and Burnside, 1835), IV, 10-11.

⁴⁹ Mary Alden Hopkins. *Hannah More and Her Circle*, (London: Longmans, 1947), 211-2; Jones, *Hannah More*, 203. *Cheap Repository Tracts, Suited to the Present Times*, (London: F.C. & J. Rivington 1819). Chetham’s Library, Manchester, Hay Portfolio, 84-96.

⁵⁰ Jones, *Hannah More*, 203.

chapbooks for the prose works. The eight new ballad titles were printed on half sheets and sold for a half-penny or three shillings and six pence per hundred. These were:

1. *An Address to the Meeting at Spa Fields*. Which begins

“What follies, what falshoods were uttered in vain,
to disturb our repose by that Jacobin Paine!
Shall Britons, that traitor who scorn’d to obey,
Of Leaders not better become the vile prey?”

The text was adapted from an earlier ballad by Hannah More, *Will Chip’s True Rights of Man: in Opposition to the New Rights of Man*, first published in 1803.⁵¹

2. *Look before you Leap*.

“Once Rome was disturb’d, for what country but yields
It’s demagogues, Palace-Yards, chiefs of Spa-Fields.
Though not yet a Republic, yet Rome loved a riot;
Where many are rulers, not any are quiet.”⁵²

3. *Fair Words and Foul Meanings*.

“I’m a tradesman well known, tho’ I boast not my wit,
I’ve too much by the Jacobin crew to be bit;
Now forget for a while the foul doctrines of Spence
And hear my appeal to your sober good sense”.⁵³

4. *The Market House Orator*, which includes the lines

“Inflam’d by the papers which lay on the table,
He read, and he drank, and he spouted while able;

⁵¹ [Hannah More], *An Address to the Meeting at Spa Fields*, ([London]: Printed by J. Evans and Son (Printers to the Cheap Repository for Moral and Religious Tracts), Long Lane, Smithfield, sold also by J. Hatchard, Piccadilly, London; by J. Binns, at Bath, [1817]).

⁵² [Hannah More], *Look Before you Leap*, ([London]: Sold by J. Evans & Son, ..., [1817]).

⁵³ [Hannah More], *Fair Words and Foul Meaning*, ([London]: Sold by J. Evans & Son, ..., [1817]), ESTC N472627.

With th' exploits of Spa-fields his fancy was fir'd,
Till to deeds as heroic himself was inspir'd." ⁵⁴

5. *The True Rights of Men or, the Contented Spital-fields' Weaver*, which includes the lines

"That some *must* be poor, this truth I will sing,
Is a law of my Maker, and not of my king:
And the true *Rights of Man*, and the life of his cause
Is not equal *possessions*, but equal just *laws*." ⁵⁵

6. *The Loyal Subject's Political Creed*. Begins

"Mock creeds and liturgies I'm told,
That make a Christian's blood run cold,
By Atheists and their friends are plann'd,
To shake the faith of Briton's Land." ⁵⁶

7. *The Fortunate Farthing: a new song*, which included the lines:

"A Jacobin meeting he never would join,
He thought ruling the State was quite out of his line;
For he knew the great secret of peace to a nation,
Is for every man in it to keep his own station." ⁵⁷

8. *The Ploughman's Ditty, being an Answer to that Foolish Question, What have the Poor to Lose?*

"Because I'm but poor,
And slender's my store,
That I've nothing to lose is the cry, Sir;
Let who will declare it,

⁵⁴ [Hannah More], *The Market House Orator, or the Loyal Weaver*, ([London]: Sold by J. Evans & Son, ... [1817]).

⁵⁵ [Hannah More], *The True Rights of Men, or, The Contented Spital-Fields Weaver*, ([London]: Sold by J. Evans & Son, ..., [1817]. ESTC N479199.

⁵⁶ *The Loyal Subjects Political Creed; or, What I Do, and What I Do Not Think*, ([London]: Sold by J. Evans & Son, ... [1817]).

⁵⁷ [Hannah More], *The Fortunate Farthing*, ([London]: Sold by J. Evans & Son, ..., [1817]).

No copy of this is known to survive, but it was reprinted in *Cheap Repository Tracts, Suited to the Present Times*, 140-2.

I vow I can't bear it -

I give all such praters the lie, Sir."

This differed slightly from the others as it was first published as a slip song by Hatchard c. 1803 and reprinted in *The Gentleman's Magazine*, and other contemporary publications.⁵⁸

In addition to the above, revised versions of four of the 1790s Cheap Repository ballads, were issued in the same series, although now adapted to provide a stronger political message. These were:

The Carpenter, which had originally been a straightforward warning about the evils of drunkenness now contained an additional political message:

A cooper came to live hard by,
A leveller was he,
Who many an artful tale could tell
How all might soon be free.

This man with democratic cant
Cou'd prate how all was wrong,
and those who heard him sing or talk,
Ne'er thought the evening long.

He took advantage of the times,
Low trade, and price of bread,
And swore it was our rulers fault,
The poor so ill were fed.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ *The Ploughman's Ditty, Being an Answer to that Foolish Question, What Have the Poor to Lose? To the Tune of: He That Has the Best Wife*, ([London]: Sold by J. Evans & Son, ... [1817]). A copy of the slip song is among the Bodleian Ballads. See also *The Gentleman's Magazine*, LXXIII (Supp. 1803), 1238-1239, *The Patriot's Vocal Miscellany*, (Dublin, 1804), *The Anti-Gallican*, (1804), 496.

⁵⁹ [Hannah More], *The Carpenter*, ([London]: Sold by J. Evans & Son, ..., [1817]. ESTC N472637.

The ballad, *Turn the Carpet* acquired the sub-title “or, Both Sides of the Question.” The two weavers now discuss “the price of bread, / so high the poor can scarce be fed.” Similarly *The Hackney coachman* gained two new verses including the lines:

I am never allur’d by those fond, fawning greetings,
Which invite us so kindly to join their base meetings.”⁶⁰

Two further verses were inserted in different parts of ballad *The Riot*, to strengthen the original anti-Jacobin message:

“Beside I must share in the wants of the times
Because I have had my full share in its crimes;
Mean time to assist us, by each Western breeze,
Some corn is brought daily across the salt seas;
Of tea we’ll drink little, of gin none at all,
And we’ll patiently wait, and the prices will fall.

When the Corsican Tyrant, of France was the chief,
We first beat the country, then snapp’d up the thief;
The French we have conquere’d, then say, my brave brother,
Shall the conqueror quarrel and fight with each other?
And think you, my boys, that the times will be mended
By spoiling the land we so bravely defended?”⁶¹

In addition to the twelve broadside ballads, there were six chapbooks, all apparently written by Hannah More. issued at this time, four of which were entirely new, and two were adapted from her previous publications. The new titles were:

1. *Private Virtues of Public Reformists, Or, a Continuation of the History of Mr. Fantom.*
2. *The Death of Mr. Fantom, The Great Reformist, Who Departed This Life, March the 20th, 1817*
3. *The Delegate: With Some Account of Mr. James Dawson, of Spitalfields.*

⁶⁰ [Hannah More], *Turn the Carpet*, ([London]: Sold by J. Evans & Son, ..., [1817], and *The Hackney Coachman*, ([London]: Sold by J. Evans & Son, ..., [1817].

⁶¹ [Hannah More], *The Riot*, ([London]: Sold by J. Evans & Son, ..., [1817]

~~4. *The Good Samaritan: The Pharisee Rebuked, and the Penitent Sinner Pardoned and Comforted: The Wiles of The Harlot Described, and Young Men Warned of the Danger of Yielding to Them.*~~⁶²

4. *Admiral Lord Radstock's Cheap Receipts for the Poor*, price one halfpenny, was advertised in the 1817 edition of *The Hackney Coachman*, but no copies have come to light. It was presumably a reprint of two communications on the subject by Radstock to the *Gentleman's Magazine*, LXXXVII (1817) pp. 102 and 230.

~~By this time, *The history of*~~ Mr Fantom, “the new-fashioned philosopher”, ~~satirizing Godwin~~ was originally published in 1797, and reprinted c.1800 by Evans and Co. and twice by Howard & Evans (1802-11). It was again published in 1817 by Evans and Son, together with ~~two further sequels.~~ ~~By this time~~ *Mr. Fantom had by then* morphed into William Cobbett, who had been a supporter of Hannah More and the Cheap Repository in the late 1790s but was now their bitter enemy.⁶³ In *Private Virtues of Public Reformists* Mr. Trueman is reluctantly required by his business to meet Mr Fantom:

Seeing on the tea-table a couple of papers, written to degrade the religion and government of the country, Mr. Trueman said, I am not surprised to find these writings on *your* table, Mr. Fantom; but I must say, I have often lamented that so many good men take in papers and periodical publications, written on principles they abhor. Thus they at once lend credit of their names to dangerous works, give more extensive to corrupt principles, and injure the minds of their servants, who naturally take up the papers when their masters lay them down. Many have thus been made Jacobins.⁶⁴

⁶² All of these were written by Hannah More, and had the imprint ([London]: Sold by J. Evans, & Son, {Printers to the Cheap Repository for Moral and Religious Tracts} Long Lane, West Smithfield; sold also by and J. Hatchard Piccadilly, London; by J. Binns, Bath; W. Bulgin, Bristol; and by all booksellers in town and country [1817]). Other editions of *The Delegate*, and *The Good Samaritan* “sold by J. Evans and Sons”, were published circa 1820, and of *The Death of Mr. Fantom*, “sold by J. and C. Evans”, was published in the 1820s.

⁶³ Stott, *Hannah More*, 206-7.

⁶⁴ Quoted from *Cheap Repository Tracts, Suited to the Present Times*, 52-3.

The date of 20th March on *The Death of Mr. Fantom* was the date of the departure of Cobbett into exile in the United States, prior to the implementation of the two repressive acts of parliament. In More's new account he has a deathbed repentance.

Oh this sinful hand, (holding it up with the other,) O that I had never had the use of it.
What guilt would I have been spared, had I lost it before I had written so much
blasphemy against my God, before it had signed so many petitions against my King,
before it had ruined the principles, and perhaps the lives of many to come.⁶⁵

The Delegate was an account of an honest Spitalfields artisan beset with financial problems, who receives a visit from a sinister "Delegate," who attempts to recruit him to his cause.

Men's eyes are now opened. Paine and Spence, and those other great enlighteners of the human mind, whose writings I shall leave with you (taking a fresh bundle out of his pocket,) have clearly exposed the folly of the old school and the old book there, (pointing to the Bible,) which have kept so many noble minds in the trammels of superstition for ages.⁶⁶

The hero ultimately receives help through the benevolence of a local gentleman. Phillip McCann has argued that this tract "exemplified the fundamentally counter-revolutionary nature of the whole charitable and educational enterprise."⁶⁷

According to Haywood, *The Death of Mr. Fantom*, and *The Delegate* are "important for two related but contradictory reasons: first they show that More was capable of writing openly vicious political satire; second, in order for the satire to be effective, More invests the texts with a unique degree of detail about the operative workings of radical organisation."⁶⁸

~~The final new tract was in the "Sunday reading" series and *The Good Samaritan; The Pharisee rebuked*, and *The wiles of the Harlot described*" although even this was given a political spin. According to David Nash:~~

⁶⁵ More. *The Death of Mr. Fantom*, 27.

⁶⁶ More, *The Delegate*, 10.

⁶⁷ Phillip McCann, "Popular Education, Socialization and Social Control: Spitalfield 1812-24," in *Popular Education and Socialization in the Nineteenth-Century*, (London: Methuen, 1974), 78.

⁶⁸ Haywood, *The Revolution in Popular Literature*, 92.

~~this verse rendition focussed closely on the emotions of pity felt by the Samaritan for the unfortunate Israelite. It is tempting to envisage this reading of the Samaritan story as reminiscent of the conservative philanthropic model that appears so readily in the tracts penned by Hannah More.⁶⁹~~

The last two chapbooks had texts adapted from previous works written by More. The first of these was *The Valley of Tears: a Vision* a re-issue of Hannah More's religious allegory *Bear Ye One Another's Burthens; Or, the Valley of Tears*, which had a complex gestation. It was first published by John Marshall in December 1796 as a halfpenny tract, and then about 1800, combined with a second Marshall tract from June 1797 entitled, *The Strait Gate and the Broad Way*. The composite work was entitled *The Valley of Tears, a Vision, in Two Parts*, and was printed by Evans & Co. for one and a half pence. However, in 1817, the two parts were again separated, and in place of the second part, the first was extended by a further 1300 words to give it a strong political message.

And now there appeared suddenly, as if by the stroke of a magician's wand, burthens of a new and unexpected nature. Artful men were upon the watch how they could turn the actual sufferings of the travellers to their own account. ... Now these hollow hearted men had every one of them a very large *secret paquet*, which they took special care to conceal by covering them with a large and very thick cloud. They thronged about some of the more ignorant and heavy-laden, with the most fawning expressions of affection, and most deceitful promises of certain help; ... They then thrust a list of their imaginary troubles into their bundles...⁷⁰

The second of the adapted texts was *The Village Disputants* which carried the sub-title, "A conversation on the subject of the present times, between Jack Anvil the Blacksmith, and Tom Hod the Mason: submitted to the perusal and consideration of all the mechanics, journeymen, and labourers in Great Britain." This owes its origins to a similar plebeian

⁶⁹ ~~David Nash, *Christian Ideals in British Culture: Stories of Belief in the Twentieth Century*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013)), 204, n. 48.~~

⁷⁰ Hannah More, *The Valley of Tears: a Vision. In two parts*. ([London]: Sold by J. Evans & Son, ... and J. Hatchard, ... London; by J. Binns, Bath:-- and by all booksellers, newsmen, and hawkers in town and country. [1817]. Quoted from *Cheap Repository Tracts, Suited to the Present Times*, 128-30.

conversation written by More entitled *Village Politics*, first published in 1792 and frequently reprinted thereafter, which is sometimes seen as a precursor of the Cheap Repository Tracts. In 1816 she had modernised the text of *Village Politics* in the light of political developments then taking place. Instead of attacking just one book – Paine’s *Rights of Man* -the new text speaks of “Some fine new papers and tracts: I find here, besides the scarcity of work, I am very unhappy and very miserable, which I should not have known without these precious little publications.”⁷¹

The Village Disputants was first published before the other Spa Fields Tracts, but not initially as a Cheap Repository Tract. Her new version went through many editions and was widely circulated in those areas thought to be most liable to insurrection – notably Manchester – where it was also reprinted. It had already gone through thirteen editions by the spring of 1817, but the fourteenth and the sixteenth and presumably the intervening edition was issued with the “Cheap Repository” series title. However, this title differs from the others described above as the relevant editions have the imprint: “printed for J. Hatchard” and were printed by Samuel Gosnell rather than by John Evans & Son.⁷²

William Hone, the writer, satirist and bookseller, made a furious attack on the “Spa-fields tracts” in the pages of his *Reformist Register*, referring to them as “the false whining hypocritical papers of this canting crew ... issued from the shop of Mr Hatchard.”

One of these addressed “to the Mechanics, Artizans and Labourers of London and Westminster,” and diligently stuck about the streets, has the impudence to say, that “the evils under which *we all* (more or less) suffer, are wholly imputable not to the

⁷¹ Hannah More, *Village Politics: Addressed to All The Mechanics, Journeymen, and Day Labourers, in Great Britain. By Will Chip, a Country Carpenter*. (London: printed for and sold by F. and C. Rivington, 1792), ESTC T207694. See Stott, *Hannah More*, 139-146 for an account of the impact of *Village Politics*. Hopkins. *Hannah More and her Circle*, 211. Quoted from *Cheap Repository Tracts, Suited to the Present Times*. 101.

⁷² In an undated letter from 1817 More states that “Lord K--- has sent six hundred Village Disputants to six gentlemen at Manchester for distribution in their separate districts”. (Roberts, *Memoirs of the Life and Correspondence of Mrs. Hannah More*, III, 249. See the entries for *The Village Disputant* on www.copac.ac.uk.

crimes of individuals, but to natural and *uncontroulable* causes;” and with unfeeling audacity, tells the poor famishing creatures who read it, that “it becomes us to submit with Christian patience, *to being put on short allowance!*”⁷³

Hannah More’s modern biographers have likewise seen these later tracts as less convincing than those of the 1790s. Hopkins merely noted that “the second venture was not so successful as the first had been,” but Mary Jones went on to offer strident criticism.

Compared with Hannah More’s lively tracts of the ‘nineties, with their vigorous moral teaching, these politico-religious tracts of the post-war years are poor stuff, repetitive, garrulous and unconvincing. Content to express *ad nauseam* the view that the government and law were not responsible for the country’s distress, they read today as ineffective replies to the shattering blows of Cobbett’s “mutton-fist.”⁷⁴

More tempered criticism is offered by Anne Stott in a recent biography of the author:

In recycling her familiar arguments, More failed to take account of the changes that had taken place since the 1790s, Revolutionary France was now Bourbon France, no longer an external threat, whilst the onward march of industrialization and the spread of elementary education (partly through Sunday schools) had created a new type of working man immune to her Burkean pieties.⁷⁵

After 1817 the elderly Hannah More withdrew from the front line of conservative pamphleteering although in 1821 she joined the Constitutional Association for Opposing the Progress of Disloyal and Seditious Principles – a body set up to undertake private prosecutions of the writers and disseminators of radical literature. She died in 1833 having spent the last five years of her life in retirement at Clifton near Bristol.⁷⁶

⁷³ *Hone’s Reformists’ Register*, I, (11) 5 April 1817, columns 324-6.

⁷⁴ Hopkins. *Hannah More and her Circle*, 212, and Jones, *Hannah More*, 204.

⁷⁵ Stott, *Hannah More*, 311.

⁷⁶ *Ibid*, 318.

Reprints of individual Cheap Repository Tracts, especially those from the 1790s, continued to appear at regular intervals thereafter. Following the death of John Evans in 1820, his two sons, John Edward and Charles, continued in partnership until about 1829, during which period they were responsible for a further forty-one reprinted titles listed on COPAC and WorldCat. John Edward Evans then continued in business alone for a decade at 42 Long Lane, before moving to 62 Snow Hill in 1839, where he continued as a printer until 1844 and thence as a bookseller and stationer until 1856.⁷⁷ J. E. Evans reprinted twenty-three surviving tract titles including two issued from the Snow Hill address. However, from the early 1830s until about 1849 a “Second Series” of individual Cheap Repository reprints appears, this time with the imprint of J.G.F. & J. Rivington on behalf of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge and printed by Gilbert and Rivington; twenty-nine titles of which are listed by COPAC and WorldCat.

The collected editions also continued to be reprinted at regular intervals published by C. & J. Rivington, with editions in 1821, 1827 and 1830. A collection of eleven tracts sub-titled “Second Series: selected from the *volume* for Sunday reading,” and another “selected from the volumes containing the longer and shorter stories” was published by J.G.F. & J. Rivington, in the early 1840s, and reprinted in the early 1850s. A “Third selection” was also published by The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge in 1853. In the U.S.A. an eight volume collection was published by the American Tract Society of 150 Nassau-Street, New York, in 1848, and again in the 1850s

The Cheap Repository was a remarkable publishing phenomenon with new titles issued over a twenty-two year period and reprints over more than fifty years. However, it is a mistake to see the tracts as a coherent set of publications designed for one audience and containing a single reasoned message. Taking the individual British tracts alone, there are six identifiable series in which new tract titles were published, and six further imprints under which the reprints were issued, quite apart from the collected editions, and those tracts printed in Dublin and the USA. In addition, Hannah More’s own political philosophy narrowed during the first two decades of the nineteenth century. In the 1790s she had been the wide ranging philanthropist and educator with a “feel” for the lives of the poor. By 1820, “sick of that

⁷⁷ Todd, *A Directory of Printers and Others in Allied Trades*, 65.

liberty which I used so to prize,” she had become a determined opponent of any political or social reform.⁷⁸

January 2016

David Stoker (“Peniarth” Brynhendre, Waunfawr, Aberystwyth, UK SY23 3PP; das@aber.ac.uk) was a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Information Studies, Aberystwyth University, until his retirement. His MPhil (University of Reading) was a study of Francis Blomefield, and his PhD (University of Wales) was entitled “Intellectual Communities and the Book Trade in Eighteenth Century Provincial England.” Since 2001 he has been studying the Aldermary and Bow Churchyard presses in London and the Cheap Repository Tracts.

The author wishes to thank the library staff of Northwestern University, Evanston, Il. and Chetham’s Library, Manchester, England for their assistance in supplying him with scans, and to Anne Stott for her comments on a draft of the article.

⁷⁸ Letter from More to Sir W.W. Pepys, 23 December 1820, William Roberts, *Memoirs of the Life of Mrs. Hannah More*, 2 vols. London: R.B. Seeley and W. Burnside, 1836) vol. 2. p.306.